

NEWS, VIEWS AND STATISTICS OF THE COAL REGION

FAIRMONT REGION OPERATORS INTERESTED IN BIG MEETING

Feel That Almost Anything May Result from Conference to be Held at Washington Early Next Week.

RAILROADS CAUSE OF ALL THE TROUBLE

Coal Production in This Region Held Down to Decidedly Low Figures Because the Mines Can't Get Cars.

Keen interest is manifested here in the conference to be held in Washington, D. C., on Monday and Tuesday, when bituminous coal operators from all parts of the country will meet to discuss the acute car shortage, the under production and the possibilities of the revival of government regulation which is charging official Washington.

The one big thing that stands out above all others is the lack of an adequate car supply and the difficulties arising from transportation troubles. In short the railroads are trying to "pass the buck" for their inefficiencies, but the operator is there to produce the under production figures to show how car shortage has been responsible for the present situation. The railroad equipment has been short and in bad order for a long time and little has been done in a speedy manner to alleviate conditions as they now exist.

Operators generally admit coal prices are too high, and the majority want to see the prices drop as soon as possible. The larger operators that have an established business have been filling contracts at what is now considered low prices and a very limited tonnage is placed on the open market. These operators, and they are in the majority in the Fairmont region, want to see the high price of coal drop.

One of the prominent operators of the region today said: "What we want in the Fairmont region is cars. If there is a full run of cars in the region for a short time the price of coal will automatically drop. The iniquitous effects of assigned cars has limited commercial coal loading and this is one of the thorns in the side of the coal industry. The price of coal is too high, and it is regulated it should be on a minimum of \$3.50 and a maximum of \$4.50. The operator must at least have fifty cents a ton profit because he has too much invested in his property. When coal sold at ninety cents the operator had little invested compared to what he has now."

Of course if a price would be fixed by a fuel administration the operators would like to see a more equitable car supply for the Fairmont region. Other regions on the Baltimore and Ohio lines are receiving a larger percentage of cars than the Fairmont region, and this matter should be adjusted.

Coal operators feel that the price of coal is too high and would like to see it drop. However, if they fix any sort of price they are subject to the provisions of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as to price fixing. Recently coal operators of Southern West Virginia met in a mass meeting and pledged themselves to try to break up the runaway market and by motion ask members to try to dispose of coal at more reasonable figures.

J. G. Grady, Dundon, W. Va., one of the vice presidents of the National Coal association, has called the committee on government relations together for Washington on Monday and Tuesday. At that time the seriousness of the situation will be discussed from all angles.

Among the Fairmonters who are expected to attend the meeting are C. H. Jenkins, a director of The National Coal association; Brooks Fleming, Jr., president of the local association; S. D. Brady, and G. T. Bell, executive vice president, all of Fairmont, and B. Lisle White, of Clarksburg, and others.

The under-production. With the ragged car supply this week the production will run probably 4,200 cars of coal. This is better than the previous week, which produced but 3,311 cars. The ragged showing of the region has been most marked.

Together with the restricted car

supply is the heavy demand of the railroads, which have poured in assigned cars galore. This tonnage ranges anything from 30 to 71 per cent of the daily coal production. Then, too, there are a number of public utilities loading coal in these fields, which must be deducted from the supply of available coal.

Inefficient car supply is responsible for the present day troubles. Even if assigned cars could be eliminated totally there would not be an adequate car supply for the Fairmont region, which usually only ranges from 28 per cent to 40 per cent, inclusive of the assigned cars.

Get 71 Per Cent. There were 410 cars loads of railroad fuel loaded off the Baltimore and Ohio railroad on Friday, or 71 per cent of the actual coal produced on the Monongah division went for railroad fuel.

Of the 410 cars all are assigned except ten cars ordered by the Maine Central. The daily consignments yesterday were as follows: B. & O., 215 cars; Bangor and Aroostook, 11 cars; C. of N. J., 15 cars; Lehigh Valley, 27 cars; New York Central, 37 cars; New York, New Haven and Hartford, 27 cars; P. & R., 39 cars; Boston and Maine, 21 cars; Maine Central, 10 cars; Maryland-Pennsylvania, eight cars.

Forty-two Mines Idle. Forty-two mines are idle on the Monongah division of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad today. There were 715 cars on the division today. Car shortage was experienced every day this week with the exception of Tuesday and that day the mines of the division loaded all but 284 cars of the cars placed. Today's cars are classified as follows: Open, 646; coke, 23; n. e. c. x., 14; M. V. T., 23. There were 674 cars placed at the mines at 7 o'clock this morning. The mines ordered a total of 1,763 cars of which number 35 cars were for coke loading. There were 47 cars left over from the previous day at the mines today.

In the West Virginia district of the Monongahela railway today there were 184 cars placed, while in the Pennsylvania district there were 215 empties placed. There are 120 assigned cars and 64 commercial cars in the West Virginia district, all of the assigned cars being New York Central equipment. There is a fifty per cent car supply in sight for the Fairmont end of the line on Monday.

Empties on the Helen's Run and Wyatt-Bingham branches of the Western Maryland railroad today total 77. This is short compared to the car supply given to the lines earlier in the week.

Some Price Inquiry. One of the significant things that developed at the investigation made by the Interstate Commerce commission in regard to open top equipment at Washington on Friday was that when coal association men were on the stand the commission directed much of its ques-

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tioning to coal prices. This appears to bear out the general trend of opinion in coal circles "that something's brewing in Washington."

The hearing was held to iron out some complaints made by the sand and gravel dealers who petitioned and protested against being deprived of the use of open top cars. They contended that during the war their business suffered along these lines and they all bore it patiently but now that the war was over they did not propose to stand it any longer without protesting.

It is believed that the commission will change its order so as to permit them to use open top cars and at the same time make provision to take care of the coal industry so that the open top equipment will not become more acute.

Blames Assigned Cars. In the course of the hearing at Washington in regard to open top equipment on Friday, John Moore, the president of the Ohio United Mine Workers of America, told the commission right off the bat that if assigned cars would be cut out the price of coal would come down. This appears to be the prevailing opinion of the vast majority of operators and miners' officials.

Daily Production. Fairmont region on Friday produced 862 cars of coal and coke—544 cars of coal and 13 cars of coke.

Due to the ragged car supply the production fell on the Monongah division of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to 695 cars of coal and coke—577 cars of coal and 18 cars of coke. Eastwardly there were loaded 483 loads and westerly 91 loads with 10 cars of coke loaded east and 8 cars loaded west. Waggon mine production is running about the same having been 11 cars on the division during the past three days.

Mines along the Monongahela railway in the West Virginia district on Friday loaded 162 cars of coal, while those in the Pennsylvania district produced 173 cars.

Production on the Helen's Run and Wyatt-Bingham branches of the Western Maryland railroad on Friday was headed toward normal, there having been 105 cars loaded on these spur.

Daily Shipments.

Shipments off the Baltimore and Ohio railroad on Friday were as follows: Curtis Bay, 42 cars; St. George's, 5 cars; Lakes, 9 cars; Michigan points, 10 cars; Ohio points, 41 cars; miscellaneous western points, 34 cars.

B. & O. Movement. East of Gratton the B. & O. on Friday moved twenty-four trains, which drew 1,091 cars.

Westernly the B. & O. moved 792 loads. There were 200 loads went to the lakes.

United Mine Workers.

Ira Marks and Nick Afell, district board members, are in the Morgantown fields today.

John Custolac, district organizer, is in the Clarksburg fields today.

Edward Matthews, secretary of sub district 4, is at work in the Clarksburg fields.

W. F. Ray, district board member, is in Charleston.

C. F. Keeney, Charleston, president of district 17, is expected to arrive here on Sunday.

Work Progressing.

Straight & McClure, civil and mining engineers, Fairmont, have been given full charge of the construction and development of a new shaft operation, on Bingham creek, for the Love Coal and Coke company, which consists of coal operators from Connellsville, Pa. The plant will be electrically equipped throughout and will be

the most up to date plant on the Wyatt branch, besides the Consol mine. The production is expected to reach one thousand tons per day when fully developed.

The foregoing mentioned firm is in charge of all work, designing all equipment, and supervising the construction, which is well under way.

Coke Operator Dead.

Word has been received here that A. Plimber Austin, banker and coal and coke operator, Uniontown, Pa., died at his home in that place on Friday night. He was fifty-three years old, and was a native of Meadville, Pa., and had been identified with the financial and business interests of that section for many years. He was an executive of the Fayette Title & Trust company for many years.

EAST SIDE NEWS

Hilderbrand Reunion.

A reunion of the Hilderbrand family will be held July 25 at Opekski. A splendid program is being arranged and a delightful reunion is looked forward to by the many members of this family.

Birthday Dinner.

Mrs. D. W. Toothman entertained a few friends at dinner Friday in celebration of her birthday anniversary.

Will Appoint Delegate.

A business session of the congregation of the First M. P. church will be held Sunday morning at the church. A delegate will be appointed to the annual conference of the Methodist Protestant church of West Virginia. The conference will be held at Clarksburg commencing on August the 23.

Returned Home.

Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Madden of Mt. Pleasant, Pa., who have been guests of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Arkwright, have returned to their home.

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Exchange This Morning.

An exchange will be held this morning at the E. C. Rowan store in Adams street by the Bethany Bible class of the Central Christian church.

Will Meet in August.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the G. A. R. will hold a meeting the first of August. The meeting was to have been held Saturday but on account of the storm was postponed. Again today a meeting was planned but many of the members are out of town and it was decided to postpone a meeting until August.

In Illinois.

A. H. Reeves of Morgantown avenue left Friday for a business trip through Illinois. He will be gone several weeks.

Personals.

Mrs. Lloyd Garlow has returned from a visit with relatives near Mt. Nebo.

Mrs. Mason of Nicholas county who has been the guest of her brother, E. A. Grose and wife of Morgantown avenue, left Friday for her home. Mrs. Mason accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Grose on their automobile trip through the Valley of Virginia.

Charles L. Robinson of Winchester, Va., is the guest of relatives here for a few days.

Miss Alma Moore of Keyser will arrive here Sunday to visit Miss Maude Merrifield in Columbia street. She has spent the past week with friends at Shinnston.

Harry E. Wilson has returned from a week's stay in Chicago, where he attended the National Elks convention.

The little son of Mr. and Mrs. Glover of Water street cut his foot Friday and the injury is a very bad one. The lad stepped on a piece of glass.

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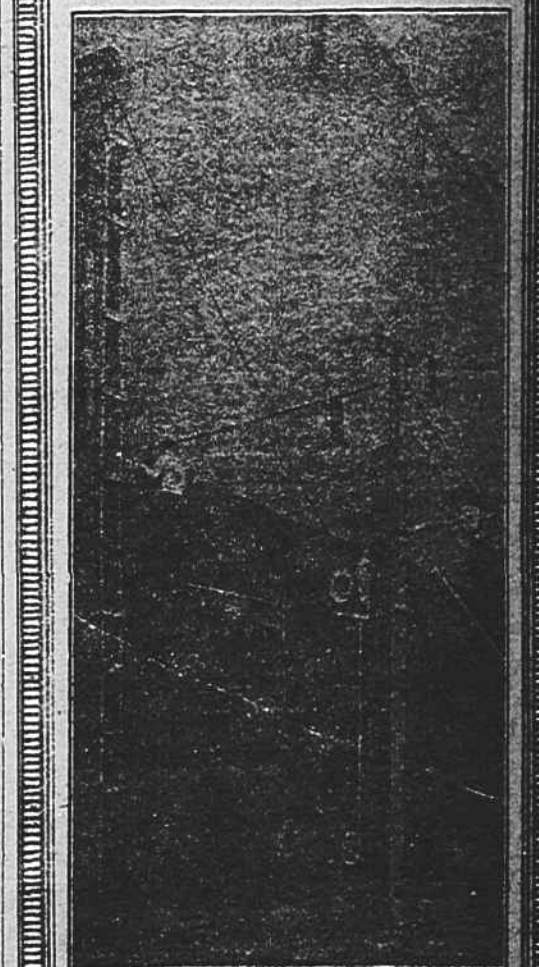
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